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# From Cleopatra to Betty Coed . . .

By Ruth Ellen Lovrien

## The Story of Cosmetics

MARCUS AURELIUS, Roman emperor, liked to have a good time. In fact, he was so fond of staying out late nights and celebrating with wine, women and song, that he lost his peach-bloom complexion and developed black semi-circles beneath his eyes. Now to Marcus, this was a sad state of affairs. He must, of course, appear as attractive as possible to the ladies, yet he could not bear the thought of giving up any of his good times. So one day he called before him his physician, Galen, giving the man orders to prepare some remedy for the rough and dry state of the emperor's royal skin.

So Galen, skillful apothecary that he was, set to work and concocted a smooth cream from sun-bleached beeswax, with the addition of almond and olive oils, borax water and sweet perfumes. Marcus Aurelius was delighted with the soothing effect of the preparation upon his skin. The evaporation of the moisture in the cream left such a cool feeling upon his face that the emperor called the remedy "cold cream." And that was how cold cream first was invented.

Cold creams today are based upon Galen's ancient formula, although certain mineral oils which do not become rancid have been substituted for the almond and olive oils in the early recipe. Cleansing creams and vanishing creams of all sorts, and face and hand lotions have developed from alterations of Galen's original formula, and these are now manufactured commercially on a large scale.

COSMETICS, such as face powders and rouges, were known long before the time of Galen. The ancient Egyptian women were versed in the art of make-up, and the famed Cleopatra knew well how to enhance her loveliness by artificial means. Nowadays it is no longer considered coquettish and vain for woman to apply make-up. Cosmetics are considered an indispensable aid to beauty.

Most face powders in common use have a basis of talc (magnesium aluminum silicate), and zinc stearate is the main constituent. Magnesium carbonate is often used to hold the perfume, for of course every face powder must be delicately scented in order to please the purchaser. Some powders are very fine and others heavy, due to the mechanical processes used in their manufacture, or due to the type of ingredients used. There are powders made for every type of skin and for every coloring. The problem of the average woman is to choose the right quality

### Cotton for 1932

Mrs. Hoover wore a printed dimity dress at a reception at the White House several days ago. It was copied after the style of a dress her grandmother used to wear.

Well-dressed women everywhere are taking up cotton—both for spectator sports wear and for formal occasions.

After a shopping trip through the shops seeing the new cotton materials it is easy to understand why "silk, the queen of fabrics," is gradually changing into "cotton, the queen of fabrics."

and the right tint of powder for her individual use. The brand usually makes little difference, although the average woman is very susceptible to a fancy name or a beautiful container. Oftentimes cheaper powders are just as effective as ones for which exorbitant prices are charged, but woman, alas, is prone to regard price as an infallible indication of value. Expensive face powders, however, often have the advantage of superior blending of ingredients, and may contain higher priced perfumes than the average.

Italian ladies in the middle ages used the dark red juice of the fruit of the deadly nightshade to produce color in their cheeks and lips. And not so long ago, ferric chloride, the coloring in ordinary red barn paint, was sometimes used in rouges. But cosmetic colorings today are perfectly harmless to the skin, and are very similar to the pigments used in food coloring. Cake rouges usually have a talcum basis, and paste rouges are built up from a cold-cream base. Carmine or aniline colors are often used, particularly the first, which is the better of the two.

EYEBROW pencils and eye-shadow usually have a base of vaseline, wax or cocoa butter. Pure charcoal or lamp-black is used for the black, and brown is obtained by mixing yellow ochre with pure caramel, obtained from cane or beet sugar. Ultramarine produces the blue color in blue eye-shadow. Powdered yellow ochre and carmine are also used in small amounts to tint brunette or rachel face powders. All of these colors are harmless.

Perfumes are used in some degree in nearly all cosmetics, of course. And from various combinations of the primary odors, oil of orange, oil of rose, and jasmine, many various scents are obtained, just as many different colors result from combinations of the three primary hues. If one purchases a bottle of perfume labelled sweet pea, he may be sure that very little of the scent is due to sweet pea, perhaps none. The odor may have been simulated by a certain delicate blend of these primary perfumes, which are purchased in concentrated form at enormous prices by the manufacturer.

IN EVERY cosmetic, powder, lotion, cream or perfume itself, there must be a fixative, that is, a substance which holds the odor and makes it lasting. For this purpose musk, ambergris and civet are used. Musk is obtained from a gland in the abdomen of a species of male deer, and when dried, is of a dark granular consistency. Ambergris is a waxy substance which occurs as a growth in the body of the whale, which is vomited by the animal and may be found floating on the sea. Civet, as one would expect from the name, is obtained from the glands of the African or Abyssinian civet cat. In dilute concentration, these fixatives have an agreeable odor, but as they are obtained in original form, they are very revolting to most people. Everyone is familiar with the unpleasant odor of the common skunk, but as one cosmetic chemist puts it, "The ordinary American civet cat smells like a rose compared to that Abyssinian baby!" Musk, ambergris and civet are all very valuable, and the cosmetic manufacturer must pay enormous prices for them.

Although Paris is famous for its exquisite perfumery, it is interesting to know that the smart French woman who wishes the best in face powders and rouges, chooses American makes. And more than this, the woman who wants the very best types of cold cream, purchases them in Iowa!

Work on making perfumes from oat hulls, or the furfural obtained from them is being carried out here at Iowa State in the Chemistry Department.

Some very satisfactory perfumes have been made, but as yet the process has not been commercialized.

Iowa may yet have a use for her surplus crops, but this time the crop will be used to satisfy the esthetic sense of many women, rather than the food needs of children who cry for their morning dish of oatmeal.